

NOS) CISAC - BW

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Memorandum of Conversation

Professor Joshua Lederberg
Suite 400, Founder's Hall
The Rockefeller University
1230 New York Avenue
New York, NY 10021-6399

Dear Josh:

This memorandum records my understanding of the main content of our phone conversation on December 13, in which we discussed the future of CISAC's Biological Weapons Working Group (BWWG). Please let me know if your understanding on any of these points differs from mine.

1. The BWWG under your chairmanship has been effective and useful. Important BW issues to which it could contribute persist. Your interest in these matters also persists, as do your exceptional stature in the relevant world community and your willingness to serve as the BWWG's chair. Thus the BWWG should continue to exist and you should continue to be its chair.
2. Changing circumstances call for changes in the BWWG's agenda. The group's previous main project on cooperative research with former Soviet BW groups has matured into a more administrative mode now being managed in another part of the Academy's Office of International Affairs. Improving capacities for dealing with the consequences of use of BW agents, which has been and remains a major interest of yours, is also being pursued now in other parts of the Academy. Topics deserving consideration as future foci for the BWWG's efforts include (but are not necessarily limited to): (a) bridging the gulf between industry and the US government on a verification protocol for the Biological Weapons Convention, (b) fostering increased standards of transparency and disclosure for research on dangerous pathogens, (c) fulfilling the bargain in Article X of the BWC, and (d) strengthening the norms against the use of BW. An important criterion for choosing among potential topics for the BWWG's attention is the likelihood of the group's having a significant impact.
3. The BWWG's membership should continue to overlap with but not be confined to the membership of the parent CISAC. Additional BWWG members may be recruited for their relevant expertise and connections. The tightening links between BW issues and nuclear and other dimensions of national security policy make it increasingly desirable that you, as BWWG Chair, also participate in at least some of the meetings of the parent CISAC. You are willing to do this to the extent of traveling to Washington DC for meetings but not to the extent of traveling to Russia.

After you let me know whether any changes are needed in this account of our conversation, I will share a suitably revised version with Bruce Alberts, Jo Husbands, John Steinbruner, and Matt Meselson.

With thanks and best personal regards,

